

Putting Your Money to Work

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[0 : 00] Well, I know John puts a lot of preparation into our singing portion of the service.

! So it's not by accident we sing, we finish with a song, Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe. So, on a morning that we're going to talk about money.

Yeah, you know, this is our favorite subject, I'm sure, to talk about money. And if all of you don't just walk out the back right now, I will be a very happy preacher today.

You know, I feel a little inadequate, to be honest with you, in talking to you about something as significant as how to give.

How to put your money to work. I feel a little inadequate because, number one, this is a church that I know does a great job at investing in eternity.

[1 : 07] Just a look at this past year is a tremendous example of how much you desire and invest in the things that really matter.

If I remember correctly, I think around \$46,000 that you gave to the summer youth missions trip. And in the last month of our time last year, I think there was almost \$100,000 that you gave as a church in contributing to the ministry here and to the ongoing work of the kingdom.

And so, in a lot of respects, I should be the one sitting in the pew. And many of you should be the ones who are here sharing the significance of how to make much of your money.

I think there's also a bit of an adequacy in my own life, just knowing how much I need, how much more room there is in my own life to grow in this area.

So, I would encourage us, this morning as we come to the Word of God, the Word of God is the standard. God has set the principles for us.

[2 : 19] That is the authority by which we live. And so, even though there is room in my own life to grow, and you can probably teach me a lot in relationship to how to be a better kingdom giver, we can all sit underneath the authority of the Scripture, and we can all find in this passage room for us to really grow in our giving to God.

But before we do that, let's go to the Word, the Lord in prayer, and ask for His help in this very important subject. God, we praise You this morning that You paid it all.

And because You paid it all, all to You we owe. And as we sang earlier, my hope is built on nothing less but Jesus' blood and righteousness.

There is security in You. There is hope in You. There is certainty in You. There is confidence for life. There is the knowledge that You will provide for our needs.

And even though at times we feel overcome by our circumstances, even though at times we feel overwhelmed by the pressures of this life, especially as it relates to finances, God, we know that we can rest in the fact, the promise that You are in control, that we can trust You with all of our resources, and that You will help us to be more like Christ.

[3 : 56] On Him is the solid rock in which we stand. All other ground is sinking sand. And so it is not this morning that we are putting our hope in Christ and in finances, but that as an expression of our life, our desire, God, is to put our hope in You alone.

So help us this morning as we look at this passage to see the significance of anchoring our hope in the solid rock. May we grow in this area.

May we shine in this world because they see that our hope is distinctive, that our hope is in Christ. May it be attractive.

May it be compelling. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. This is something that you have heard year after year.

This is a series of messages that the pastor has consistently brought to you in relationship to how can we be better stewards of God's money.

[5 : 04] So I really have nothing extra to bring to the table that you haven't already heard. I just hope that through our time together this morning, what I can do is just remind us of those simple, basic principles, the things that God has told us in His Word so that we can be more like Christ, be reminded of the standard and grow in this area of generosity and kingdom building.

Of course, we know that Jesus had much to say about this significant topic. Although the crowds that came to hear Him speak were sprinkled with those who were rich and those who were poor and everything in between, we find even at the outset of Jesus' ministry, this is something that He came to correct.

This is an understanding that He desired to help bring some clarity to, even at the very beginning, the outset of ministry. He's coming to a group of individuals in that ancient Middle East period of time that believed that money was an indication that God was actually blessing an individual. And so Jesus had to shatter that understanding. He had to help them understand that whether you had money or didn't have money, that God's favor could be on a life regardless of the economic status of an individual.

And as a matter of fact, those who seemed to be most favored by God because they had the most in the bank account were actually those who were furthest away from the kingdom. He wanted to help correct their understanding of this important principle of money.

[6 : 45] The very beginning of ministry on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 6, familiar passage to you, Jesus says, Don't be anxious. Don't be fearful. Saying, What shall we eat?

Or, What shall we drink? Or, What shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after these things. This is not only an important topic for us today, this is a differentiating topic.

This is a distinguishing component of the Christian life. This sets you apart from the world. Where is your confidence? Where is your hope?

Is your hope in your 401k, your savings account, all of those things that you are putting your confidence in for the future? Or, Is your hope in God? Is it on the solid rock upon which we stand? That all other ground is sinking sand? The world looks at money in one way, and Jesus sought to bring a different perspective.

[7 : 48] A heavenly one. What we do with our money can either enhance our testimony, increase our joy, bring delight to God, and maximize our future reward.

Or, it can distract our focus from what really matters, lead to anxiety, dissatisfaction, and ineffectiveness in the Christian life.

So it really raises this important question, what will we do with our money? And how can we put our money to work? Even the world understands that there are opportunities in relationship to money. Just this past week, there was an article that I read that said that eight of the world's wealthiest men are richer than three and a half billion people combined in the world.

That's a staggering figure. Eight people, as this one article said, that can fit into a minivan, own more than the sum total of individuals who can fit on, let me get the figure correct.

[8 : 52] Oh, I lost it. Here we go. 50 million school buses.

Think of that. Eight men that fit into one minivan have more than the sum total of all the people that can fit on 50 million school buses.

That is mind-boggling. And of course, the world has their ideas of how to resolve the issue. This distribution of wealth that needs to happen.

And all of these ideas that certainly the world is broken and we need to fix it somehow. And of course, Jesus has his ideas as well.

And the Apostle Paul, in working through this issue, wants us to understand that having wealth is not the problem. It's what we do with the opportunities that wealth affords us.

[9 : 56] What will we do to make much of the gifts that God has entrusted to us? How can we put it to work in this world? It's a plan that involves deliberate investment, but one that has a guaranteed result.

And that's what I want to look at this morning from 1 Timothy chapter 6. So turn with me, if you would, to 1 Timothy chapter 6. And we'll look at just these three verses.

And I want us to see that in three verses, there are two commands and one promise. And as we look at this together this morning, I want us to understand that Paul is interested in helping Timothy, as a pastor to the church of Ephesus, to coach and to encourage and to command the people in relationship to this important area of life.

So 1 Timothy chapter 6, if you're a guest with us this morning, it's on page 993 in the Pew Bible in front of you. 1 Timothy chapter 6, actually beginning in verse 17.

It says, As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

[11:17] They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasures for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Paul begins encouraging Timothy with some strong language. He tells Timothy to charge the rich of the present age. We see that his encouragement to Timothy is a non-negotiable.

I want you, Timothy, as a pastor, to elevate this to the area of urgency that it belongs. I want you to help the people who are rich in your church, rich in that culture, to understand the significance of the opportunities that they have and that this is a non-negotiable in life.

This is not optional. This is something that is commanded by the Apostle Paul and coming from the Lord himself to us this morning. Something that we need to know.

Something that will encourage and help us in relationship to using the money that God has given to us in a way that honors God and magnifies his testimony in the world.

[12:36] Now, Timothy, you all know, joined the Apostle Paul in ministry early on in life. There was some real suffering and persecution that took place in Timothy's hometown as Paul was there.

And yet, his mother and grandmother entrusted Timothy to Paul's care. And so, Timothy was really, in a lot of ways, a real son, not just a spiritual son to the Apostle Paul, but in many ways, nurtured and encouraged and raised by the Apostle Paul himself.

And here, Timothy is in the city of Ephesus helping to provide some pastoral leadership over this city. Now, this was a city that was kind of at the crossroads of the Roman Empire.

This was a prominent and affluent city in many ways. And one look at the city from Acts chapter 19, you'll get an idea of how wealthy they were.

Remember that once they were converted to Christ, they had this massive bonfire of all of these books of sorcery and witchcraft that they had owned and they wanted to get rid of.

[13:45] Remember that? Well, it says that when they brought their books and counted the pieces of them, they found that they was worth 50,000 pieces of silver.

Now, looking at commentaries, we find that one piece of silver would have been equivalent to 150 salaries for the year. And to kind of equate that to our day and age, that would have been somewhere around \$7.8 million worth of books that they burned in that bonfire.

So, we can understand why Paul would be talking about the rich of that age. This was an affluent community. A group of individuals who had great opportunity to use their wealth in a way that was pleasing to the Lord.

This was not just a friendly suggestion. This was a command, a charge. Now, I want us to understand that this not only relates to the city of Ephesus, but this relates to you.

There are three little bullet points right there, and I just want to lead you through quickly, helping you understand how this relates to our specific situation, where we live in this present day.

[15:02] I want to take a look at the world situation. I want to understand where we fit in this picture, and I want to see that this is relevant to us this morning. First, just a quick look at the world situation.

Almost one billion people are living on just a dollar a day. Can you imagine? One billion people living on a dollar a day.

Nearly half of the world's population are living on two and a half dollars a day. And 80% of the population is living on \$10 a day.

And in case you're thinking, well, you've got to apply the going rate of that culture and then understand how that factors in, maybe this will bring this to light for us.

There are some 22,000 children who die every single day because of malnutrition. That's how far the dollar has gone.

[16:08] It's not feeding tummies. It's not meeting even the basic needs of life. 60% of the people around the world have no access to clean water.

Even the things that we take for granted from day to day, 60% of the world doesn't even have access to clean water. So how rich are you? Well, if you're making more than \$10 a day, you're richer than 80% of the world.

You're in the top 20%, the upper echelon of society. And if you make a minimum wage, \$8.15 here in 2017, you make in one hour what most of the world doesn't even make in an entire day.

If your household income, combined income, is \$50,000 or more, you make five and a half times more than the typical person.

And if your household income is \$80,000 or more, you make eight and a half times, almost nine times more than the person who lives in this world.

[17 : 21] So is this relevant to us? You better believe it. And it's relevant not only because we are part of the puzzle here. We fit in the category of those who are wealthy.

But it's relevant to any of us who have experienced a measure of anxiety thinking about the future in terms of how we're going to make it. Like if you come to the end of a month and you wonder how you're going to get by, that the pressures of finances are weighing down on your shoulders, then this passage is for you.

If you have ever been disappointed by a financial investment and your heart has been in angst over the money that you have lost, well, this passage is for you.

If you're wondering how to make ends meet from day to day and you're worried about how your 401k will benefit you at your retirement age, then this passage is for you.

Maybe you're stressed about your current employment situation or lack thereof. If that's your situation today, then this passage is for you.

[18 : 43] So let's look at some of the obstacles. What are some of the things that get in the way of God helping us to make the most of our money?

What stands in the way? And that is our first point for this morning. There are some obstacles. The obstacles to a good investment. And if you can move to the next group of slides, that would be great.

Good. I think you already did that. First, I want us to see here in verse 17. It says, Charge them not to be haughty.

Charge them not to be haughty. That is the first obstacle to making the most of your money. Money can make us haughty.

Money can make us haughty. That's just another word for proud. Charge them not to be haughty. Paul's first concern is the unity of the church.

[19 : 50] His focus is how the church relates together and how the church represents Christ. When we use our money in the wrong way, we tarnish the reputation of God.

We corrupt the beauty of the gospel in this world. Money has the potential of creating huge divisions and factions and separations within the church.

This is not just a tangential issue. This is a central one. It's something that we see throughout the New Testament. We see it's something that's addressed consistently throughout the New Testament.

Jesus deals with it. The church of Jerusalem deals with it. The church of Corinth is dealt with this issue. The Jerusalem Council in commissioning Paul and Barnabas to ministry makes sure, Paul, that you don't forget the poor.

The writer of the Hebrews commands it. Paul commends the church of Philippi for their investment into his ministry. This is a significant issue in the church that causes incredible division or at least it can cause incredible division.

[21 : 08] Those who are proud, those who are haughty. How does that look? What form does that take? Well, any number of things. It can relate to the company that people keep.

It can relate to the small groups or the little cliques that they're willing to associate with. Somebody maybe doesn't smell right. Maybe they don't talk right. Maybe they don't dress right.

Maybe they don't seem to have the right education or the right etiquette. They just don't know how to do church the right way. They don't come from the right part of town.

They don't seem to have the right hygiene. They certainly don't dress in the distinguished way they should be dressing when they come to church. Maybe they don't come from the most prominent job.

So it's hard to make a connection with them because there doesn't seem to be any overlap or any common ground with them. And so instead of engaging them in conversation, there is distance that happens.

[22 : 09] That's natural. I understand that when it comes to comfort. But those who are interested in loving God and loving their neighbor will be those who will engage the individuals who are right around them.

The Bible talks about the exclusiveness and prejudice that can happen for those who are haughty and those who are proud. James really concentrates on this in chapter two. He uses an example of a man who comes into the church with fine clothes and gold rings and then obviously this poor man who walks in and there is this distinctiveness in how they treat these two individuals.

The one, he says, hey, come sit next to me. I want you to have the place of honor. You're wealthy. Let's make this connection. But then the one who is poor, he says, hey, you go stand over there. You can be in the room, but go have a seat in the corner over there or if you want to, you can sit here at my feet. Pride does a great deal of harm in the church.

[23 : 16] Church that was intended to be this beautiful picture of the unity of Christ and the unity of the people that God has connected in Christ.

I wonder this morning if we need to ask ourselves this question. What ministries or activities do I avoid because it either makes me uncomfortable or takes too much work?

That may be an indication that pride is something that God needs to help you overcome. Like for example, on a Saturday morning you might say, I don't really want to go to the homeless people and hand out oatmeal because it makes me feel so uncomfortable.

Or maybe you would say, I don't want to serve in the nursery, that is way too much work and I might get stuck there. Just as a side note, for at least eight years when I was in high school and college, I got stuck in the fours and fives ministry.

Every single Sunday for four years. Some of those kids still look to me as a significant example and mentor and help in their life.

[24 : 43] Let me tell you, it might be hard work, but it's worth it. The investment that you make in the hearts and lives of children, partnering with parents, helping to lead them along may be the very best ministry you could ever do because it will have the most traction and will have the most fruit.

Think about that. But sometimes we want the upfront ministries, we want the adult ministries, we want the things that are fun and exciting and I get that.

But there are times where God is asking us to overcome some of those obstacles of pride perhaps in our life to do what's difficult so that we can really magnify the testimony of Christ in this world.

Or maybe greeting the guests on a Sunday morning is a little awkward for you because you may have met them a couple of weeks ago but you kind of forget their name.

Oh the things that we can do to save face, to keep ourselves from embarrassment because of pride in our hearts when we could actually be useful for the Lord in significant ways.

[26 : 04] Pride is a way, it is an obstacle, it gets in the way of us being able to use money in a way that pleases the Lord. But it doesn't stop there.

He talks about being haughty but here also in verse 17 he says, don't be haughty or set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches.

The second obstacle is that money can misdirect our hope. And it was of the Lord that we sang, my hope is built on nothing less but Jesus' blood and righteousness.

When our hope is founded in Christ alone, it sets a testimony to the world of where our confidence is. It's not Christ plus something else, it's Christ alone.

And money can misdirect our hope. Biblical hope is not the possibility of wishful thinking that something might happen.

[27 : 06] Biblical hope is where do you put your confidence? Where is your security? Where have you placed your hope for the future? And there's a significance here in the grammar.

The Apostle Paul uses a word that helps to describe something that has happened in the past but it has ripple effects into the future. That our hope has been placed in Christ and because it's there, it will have real and tangible results for the future of your life.

In each season of life it's easy to get distracted, isn't it? The pressures of life weigh down on you, the financial burdens you experience never seem to go away.

Maybe you're a college student, you're barely making ends meet, trying to pay the monthly bills, trying to put some food in your stomach and to have a couple extra bucks so that you can do some things with your friends.

Or maybe you're a young married couple and now there's the burden of a new home or a new car or now purchasing all of those things that are so necessary for raising children.

[28 : 24] There are the new pressures of family and medical insurance and all of those things that are bombarding you and you say, well, I will use my money sometime in the future when I get established.

That pushes you into middle age. And you have an established job, you don't have to jockey for a position anymore. But now the expenses that were smaller when your kids were little, now they begin to expand as kids are getting married, as now you're helping them purchase cars and you're helping them with various school activities or you're sending them to college.

Pressures continue to weigh you down. Or perhaps you're nearing retirement and all of the investment that you have wanted to do in the past, you realize you've got some catching up to do. There are regular trips to the doctor, still helping out with the kids periodically as they have left the home, but now the financial burdens are still considerable.

The stock market hasn't been as favorable to you as you had hoped. And the looming pressures of retirement age are weighing down.

[29 : 42] Perhaps you are retired. There's no more income. What used to be coming in month after month is no longer there. The pressures of life weigh you down.

At each season of life, the money that has flowed through your hands seems to evaporate. And the result of our focus is diverted from hope to God, to hope in the security of things.

That's the danger. That's the obstacle that keeps us from making much of the money that God has entrusted to us. The Apostle Paul is calling them to something greater.

He says, Don't put your hope in the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

Now, this little phrase is packed full of promise. That God richly provides. He gives lavishly. He gives liberally.

[30 : 46] He gives graciously. He gives abundantly. All of these things that are couched within this term. Do we trust the rich provisions of God?

Does our confidence in Him show to the world that He is a God who is faithful to care for our needs? And not just a little bit, but abundantly, overflowing.

That He cares for our needs richly, but He also cares for our needs individually. Notice it says that He provides for us. He knows your unique situation.

He cares about the circumstances that you face. He knows the pressures before you even ask Him for help. He cares about you individually. He doesn't just provide us with a few things, but He says He provides us with everything.

It's the word for all. It's all-encompassing that God has given all things for us to enjoy. He does not skimp on His kids. We do not have a God who just piddles away a little bit of His resources for us, but He gives us all things for our enjoyment.

[32 : 05] He wants us to delight in His provision because He wants us to delight in Him. But more than anything, the provision that God has given to us is provision through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Just keep your finger here in 1 Timothy chapter 6, and I want just briefly to turn with me to Romans chapter 8. I want you to see what God has given to us through Christ.

Familiar verse, Romans chapter 8, verse 31. If you're visiting with us, it's on page 944.

Romans says in verse 31 of chapter 8, what then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare, notice that word, it's integral here, he did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all.

How will he not also with him graciously give us all things? grace? I want you to think about the seriousness of our discontentment.

[33 : 21] The seriousness of our discontentment is to say, God may have given us the best in Christ, but it's not enough. That's what we say when we become anxious about the things that God has seemed to withhold.

when he has given us Christ, he's given his best, he's given us his all, and he promises to meet all the other things. If he can give us the supreme things in Christ, he can give us the secondary things of this world.

But let's move to the next part of this passage. In chapter, in verse 17 of 1 Timothy chapter 6, we saw the obstacles to our investment.

Now in verse 18, we're going to see some opportunities. Some opportunities. I need to move through this a little bit more quickly. Here's what it says. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasures for themselves as a good foundation for the future.

There are two commands in this little verse that both orient themselves around good works. First we can see that money can be a means of blessing others.

[34 : 40] Paul almost repeats himself in this verse. He wants to stress the significance of the goodness that we can be about, the opportunity that comes to us in using the wealth that he has distributed to us to bless others, to do good works for others.

Here in this first little phrase, they are to do good, is a compound word that is good works. It's the *agathos ergon*. The second here, be rich in good works, is also good works, but it's *kalas ergon*. And you might say, who cares about these things? Well, what I want you to see is that there are, there's a distinction between the two. The first concentrates on the goodness as it relates to benevolence, and blessing, and helping, and distributing, and meeting needs.

It has as its focus the welfare of other people. When you are involved in doing good works in this way, you are interested in enhancing your surroundings, and helping, and enabling the people who are around you.

Paul starts with this general do good, and then he moves to the more specific features of this statement in the next command. To do good always involves using our wealth in a positive way.

[36 : 05] And here, *agathos* is something that involves benevolence and care for the individuals around us. It asks this question, how can I use my money to bless the world around me?

How can I use the world? How can I use my money to bless the world around me? Now, the church of Corinth is an example of this kind of giving through the exhortation of the Apostle Paul.

We find in 2 Corinthians chapter 9 that they did give, and as a result of their giving in chapter 9, we see so many things that trickle out of that.

There was thanks that went to the church of Corinth for their contribution. There was thanks that went to God for meeting a need. There was glory that went to the Lord for the way that He was able to settle their hearts and to help them in crisis.

A connection was made between two churches, and hearts were knit together. There was praying that happened from the Jerusalem church to this church of Corinth, and the testimony of the gospel was magnified in the area because of this sacrificial and beneficial care.

[37 : 22] money can be used as a means of blessing, but also money can be used as a means of bearing fruit. That's really what this second aspect of being rich in good works is all about.

It concentrates on the intrinsic or inherent nature of the rightness of this deed. It is an overflow or an expression of what is truly going inside of the heart.

It's a reflection of what the work that God is doing in a life by helping to bear out good works in the world. Is there an abounding work of God in your life?

It will show up in how you do good works, how you bless, and how you help the world around you. It is inherently right. We are told not just to hoard our money, but to give it lavishly, to be rich in this process, to emulate our Savior who was rich and for our sakes became poor.

We are, as people who have been recipients of the grace of God, to also bestow that grace on the world around us, to be rich in good works.

[38 : 45] In Matthew 5, 16, Jesus says this. He says, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your what? Your good works. It's the same word.

That's the word *kalas*. That's the word that we find here. How does the fruit of the Spirit show up in your life? Is it creating righteousness? Is it creating benevolence to the world around you?

And that's really now the two components that Paul focuses on here in terms of being rich in good works. How do we do that? Well, he gives two examples.

There in verse 18, he says, Be generous and be ready to share. Be generous. Be ready to share. Be liberal in your sharing.

Bountiful in your giving. Willing to contribute to the needs around you. And this word, ready to share, is also closely connected to the word fellowship, the word *koinonia*.

[39 : 46] This really is a way for us to be connected as God's people, is when we are contributing to needs. Maybe the sharing involves your money, but maybe it also involves your time.

That instead of spending extra time that you might do on the side to build up more income, maybe instead what you do is you use those gifts to benefit the church.

Like, maybe you know how to fix a car. Instead of fixing a car for money, you decide, you know what, we've got some people in our church that need their car fixed. Or maybe you know that there are individuals in the church who have issues with their home and it's breaking down.

Maybe the plumbing or electrical is going bad and you can say, listen, I can do that. I can use my time. I can use my skills. And instead of building into me, I can build into a brother or sister in Christ. Maybe you are really gifted in the area of cooking or baking or you are a good seamstress and you can use your gifts and your time to benefit somebody who's in need.

[40 : 57] That's what God has called us to. But it doesn't end there. God doesn't just give us the obstacles. He doesn't just give us the opportunities. But he finishes here with a promise.

He finishes with the outcome. What does it result in in life? What is the benefit to me? We see that here in verse 18.

Thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. I want us to see two things.

I want us to see that it leads to eternal reward in heaven. And secondly, that it leads to eternal life with God. God has always called us to a long view of investment.

He's always called us to a long view of a future look as it relates to everything in life. when it relates to suffering, when it relates to love, when it relates to loving our neighbors.

[42 : 02] All of these things, including money, finds its hope in the future. This guaranteed eternal reward in heaven. The motivation is the glory of Christ.

The motivation for us is how does it show Christ in the world? And how can I take part in making much of him where I am?

It's an evidence, secondly then here, of eternal life. How does it lead to eternal life? And you might say, time out. Wait a second.

Are you telling me that we are saved by giving? No, I'm not telling you that at all. What I am telling you though is that this is such a distinctive fruit of a Christian.

This is such a work of the Spirit that only those who are in Christ will love this way. It's an unmistakable mark of a true believer. It's the way they meet needs of their Christian family.

[43 : 10] Just write down Matthew chapter 25. Matthew chapter 25. I forget where it begins. I'll look here for a second.

Matthew chapter 25. Beginning at verse 31.

It says, When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne and before Him will be gathered all the nations.

And He will separate the people one from the other as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And what is the standard? You might ask.

As He works through this passage, He demonstrates that those who are involved in meeting needs, in helping those who are naked, in clothing them, in feeding those who are hungry, in giving drink to those who are thirsty, those are the ones that will be put on the category of sheep where those who refuse to do that will be considered goats.

[44 : 24] Jesus says here in verse 40, The King will answer them, Truly I say to you, as you did to one of these, of the least of my brothers, you did it to me.

The hallmark of a Christian life is the spiritual fruit that God will create in your life to give you a compassion for the world around you so that you can work out this loving your neighbor principle, not only in the world, but especially as it relates to people here in this church, those who are your brothers and sisters in Christ.

How is the Spirit showing up in your life? And just to close, you might be asking yourself, Where do I go from here? What's the next step?

What do I need to do? How do I make this process of loving God in this way with my money, of making the most of my money?

The danger at this point is to give you a number. The danger at this point is to give you a percentage or some dollar amount to shoot for or some number of people that you need to help.

[45 : 36] But the target is Christ. The model, the example, the supreme example of all things is found in Him.

He is the target. So until we measure up to His example, we're going to fall woefully short of the standard. So how can our giving be shared by the example of the Lord?

How can your giving demonstrate the hope that you have in heaven? How can we shift our focus onto eternal joys so that we can magnify our delight in God?

That is the direction that we need to go in and ask God for help in providing wisdom and clarity on how to do that. unless our giving looks like Christ then we've got some work to do.

Though He was rich yet for your sake He became poor so that you through His poverty might become rich. That is the standard.

[46 : 38] May God help us to measure up to that standard through the power of the Spirit working within us. Let's pray. Lord, we understand the weightiness of this subject.

We understand the sensitivity of this topic. We recognize how much room we have to grow in this area.

Oh God, help us to magnify You through our giving. help us to put aside these obstacles the pride that often gets in the way and the hoping in this worldly stuff that often redirects our attention from things that are truly eternal.

And help us to see the opportunities that are right in front of us the benevolence that we can give to those around us and how it bears out fruit the gospel testimony of a life that's been changed.

Lord, help us to be those kinds of people so that we can show the world that our hope is in heaven and not in the things of this earth. We pray that You would be blessed through the transformation that will happen in our lives.

[47 : 59] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. As we go and sing, I want to just make opportunity for any of you who do not know Christ. Maybe as you're listening this morning you say, you know, I'm not sure that I'm that kind of person.

Maybe the Spirit isn't really living inside of me. We would love to lead you to an understanding of who Christ is in the gospel. We encourage you during this singing time to come forward.

And if you would like to be a member of this church, be part of this fellowship, be part of the connection that we have in ministering to one another and ministering to the world together, we would love just to encourage you to make that statement public by coming forward this morning.

Why don't we stand and we sing as we close this last song. And I'll talk about you through this holy chat chat guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo I think of a better way to end this service than that song. And I can't think of another truth that is so distant from me.

[52 : 44] guitar solo